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MEMORANDUM:The Aims of Peiping's Foreign Policy

Communist China's long run objective is the establishment of a Communist world patterned on Peiping's own militant revolutionary brand of Marxism-Leninism. But this is for the present clearly more an article of faith--a future condition to be hoped for--than an immediate goal of Peiping's foreign policy.

During the next few years the Chinese Communists will strive for intermediate objectives designed to prepare the way for bolder advances later on. Peiping's current efforts are aimed at ejecting US power from the mainland of East Asia, increasing Chinese influence in the underdeveloped world, and supplanting Moscow as leader of the world Communist movement, in free-world parties and even inside the bloc.

These objectives and the methods by which they are pursued are shaped by Maoist ideology, Chinese tradition, Peiping's power position, and the personalities of the Chinese leaders themselves.

China's Leaders

Mao and his lieutenants are dedicated, fanatic Communists with tremendous energy. They have a messianic conviction of the righteousness of their cause, the correctness of their doctrine and the inevitability of their success. The Chinese leaders exhibit the traditional China-centered view of history and civilization marked by an arrogant, patronizing attitude toward other nations. This has been intensified by Peiping's success in reasserting Chinese independence and power after nearly a century of foreign domination which left deep scars and led the Chinese to count themselves among the victims of colonialism and racial exploitation.

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The unique experience of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in fighting its way to power in over two decades of guerrilla warfare against vast odds has strongly conditioned the thinking of the Chinese leaders. Mao Tse-tung and his veteran colleagues have so adapted communism to reflect Chinese experience that in practice the Chinese and Communist ingredients are thoroughly mingled. To a considerable extent then, Peiping's foreign policy is a projection into the world arena of the principles and concepts developed in the prosecution of China's long civil war. Indeed, Communist China's foreign policy is primarily a strategy for revolutionary war. That is, it apparently is conceived in terms of conflict rather than of adjusting relations with other states by negotiations; revolutionary wars against those who align themselves with China's opponents are encouraged and supported; and any compromise or concession, except those made expedient by some tactical situation, is viewed as surrender. International politics is viewed as a great guerrilla struggle in which the opponent is to be constantly harassed and threatened.

Communist Chinese staying power, the ability to concentrate on long-range goals no matter how hopeless the odds may seem at the moment, has been amply demonstrated. After the Long March, even though Communist forces had dwindled to only about 25,000 the leaders continued to focus their efforts on the time when they would come to control all of China.

The Chinese have been sustained by the conviction that a tightknit, determined group following correct Communist principles could in time wear down an enemy--no matter how great his initial superiority--and eventually reduce him to absolute inferiority. A key element in the concept of protracted struggle has been Mao's admonition to have contempt for the enemy strategically but to respect him tactically. In other words, one must have confidence in one's own ability and the utmost contempt for the enemy. At the same time, however, in actual engagements the weaker force must always take into account the immediately superior strength of its adversary. Peiping's foreign policy has thus come to have a grand and dangerous ambitions but is almost always cautious and realistic in practice.

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A degree of caution is also forced on Peiping's policymakers by what the Communists term "objective circumstances." Communist China is an underdeveloped country and its armed forces are unable to conduct the technologically advanced warfare of which the US and the USSR are capable; hence China poses a direct military threat only in nearby parts of Asia. Long-term economic problems, especially the pressure of population on the land, have limited Peiping's capability for action outside China's frontiers. On the other hand, the very size of China's population enables the regime to accept considerable manpower losses, and this along with China's enormous size makes Chinese leaders confident that, if necessary, China could absorb a tremendous amount of military punishment and still in the long run overwhelm an invading enemy. It has even led them to make optimistic statements about their ability to weather a nuclear attack.

China's Three World View

China's leaders divide the nations of the world into three main groups: the Communist world, which includes China and other bloc states; the capitalist world, which includes the US, Western Europe, the white nations of the British Commonwealth, and Japan; and the Third World, which includes the underdeveloped, ex-colonial, nations.

The Capitalist World

For both ideological and nationalistic reasons the Chinese regard the US as their number one enemy. From the ideological point of view, the US as the leading "capitalist imperialist" power must be totally discredited to demonstrate the correctness of Chinese doctrine. From the nationalistic point of view, the US frustrates Chinese ambitions in Asia and the American military presence in the Western Pacific appears to Peiping to pose a major threat to China's security. Immediate security interests and the short reach of its military power leads Peiping to concentrate its main efforts on changing the balance of forces in the Far East, stirring up anti-American feeling and undermining US alliances and military base agreements. Elsewhere the Chinese are also intensifying their efforts to weaken the American position and to establish the US in the eyes of Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans as the white imperialist oppressor.

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Other areas of the capitalist world such as Western Europe and Japan are conveniently labeled an "intermediate zone" by the Chinese--a means of justifying and rationalizing Peiping's efforts to seek economic and other contacts. Here, as elsewhere, the Chinese seek to enhance their own power and prestige and undercut US leadership. Peiping has dispatched wide-ranging purchasing missions, and competition for new markets leads Western and Japanese industrialists to press for improved relations with Peiping.

The Communist World

The Soviet Union has recently come to rival the US as the main threat to Chinese ambitions. Well before the Sino-Soviet split surfaced in 1960 nationalistic and ideological factors combined to produce a growing enmity. Peiping, now struggling with Moscow for leadership of the world Communist movement, regards Soviet "revisionism" as a dangerously degenerate force which is leading the movement to destruction. Ideological conflicts are overlayed on traditional anti-Russian feeling stemming from Tsarist territorial grabs. Chinese leaders are nervously conscious of their long common frontier with the USSR and on guard against Soviet subversion among border minorities.

Bitter Chinese attacks on the Soviet leadership are conducted throughout the world and at all levels. Nonbloc Communist parties have become major Sino-Soviet battlegrounds. In some countries such as Japan and New Zealand the Chinese have captured the local Communist parties. In others, especially in Latin America and Western Europe, they are promoting dissident factions and supporting separate pro-Peiping party organizations. In international Communist front movements the Chinese have made a major effort to capture the leadership and to swing these organizations behind China's militant policies. For example, such forums as the World Peace Council and the World Federation of Trade Unions have been repeatedly disrupted by polemical wrangling.

Today, both the capitalist and Communist worlds are devoting a very considerable effort to coping with problems at least in part created by Peiping, and the Chinese have come to have a far greater impact everywhere than their military or economic power would seem to justify.

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This is primarily because large areas of the world are peculiarly vulnerable to Chinese troublemaking. The rapid dissolution of colonial empires in Asia and Africa has left a political vacuum marked by weak, inexperienced governments and uncertain, shifting national alignments. With large expectations and small capabilities, their people often grow frustrated with the status quo and are attracted to radical "solutions" to their difficulties.

At the present time most of China's foreign policy efforts are being channeled into two basic struggles: the drive to achieve great power status, international respectability, and world-wide influence and the simultaneous, two-pronged challenge to the US and the USSR. These threads intertwine and pervade all aspects of Chinese Communist foreign relations. However, while Peiping has shown a readiness to take on Washington and Moscow at the same time, it has cautiously sought to avoid a head-on struggle with two adversaries of such superior strength and has chosen the Third World as the main battleground.

The Third World

In the Third World--the underdeveloped nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America--the Chinese aim not only to erode US influence but also to displace the Soviet leadership of leftist movements. They champion popular causes and seek to establish themselves as the mentors of the newly independent. Peiping emphasizes its identity of interests and experience with those of have-not nations. Communism, as such, often is not stressed but much is made of anti-imperialism and national liberation struggle.

Diplomacy, trade and aid, propaganda, subversion, the implied threat of military force, and the specter of an approaching nuclear weapons capability are employed simultaneously and in varying proportions. Of these propaganda is an instrument particularly suited to the evangelistic nature of Chinese Communism. Peiping, with limited material power, often uses it with great skill.

In the Third World the Chinese also appear to lay great store in guerrilla warfare following Mao's guidelines, and they provide moral and material support

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for "wars of liberation" wherever possible. One of the advantages of such support for insurgency is that it can be pursued at low cost and little risk to Communist China itself. Peiping supplies training, advice, small quantities of weapons, and massive propaganda support. Thus, with a relatively modest investment the Chinese have been a major factor in the creation of the difficult situations which face anti-Communist forces in Africa and Southeast Asia.

Vietnam

The Communist struggle for control of South Vietnam is of paramount current interest to the Chinese. Peiping's priorities of action are determined by the Chinese ability to influence events, and Southeast Asia and particularly Vietnam, being in what Peiping considers its security zone, are receiving top attention. Vietnam is the place where short-term aims, long-term ambitions, and most facets of Chinese foreign policy come into focus. Indeed, a large measure of Peiping's concern over developments in Vietnam springs from the effect they can have on Peiping's broader struggles with Washington and Moscow.

It is clear Peiping sees the Vietnam struggle as an opportunity to demonstrate the correctness of its line that the US is a "paper tiger," and that a properly conducted "war of liberation" can be brought off in the face of US military power without precipitating a major international war. At the same time Communist victory would vindicate the Chinese line in the Communist dispute over tactics, and Soviet pretensions to leadership of the world movement would be discredited. US prestige would be seriously damaged and the US ability to help cope with local guerrilla warfare would be placed in doubt. At the same time Peiping's stature throughout the world would be enhanced. On the other hand, a Communist failure in Vietnam would tend to discredit Peiping and to check the momentum of China's drive for greater international influence. Thus, the stakes in Vietnam are clearly high for China's leaders.

Nevertheless, they wish to avoid escalation of the struggle into a major Sino-American war, which might bring about the destruction of China's industrial and advanced weapons facilities. While Peiping's

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leaders may be optimistic that a wider war can be avoided, they have been making preparations against the possibility of at least a limited engagement growing out of US attacks against North Vietnam. Thus far, they have avoided risky countermoves to limit the northward extension of US air strikes against targets in North Vietnam. It is likely, however, that the Chinese leaders would be prepared to risk a major military conflict with the US should they feel their vital security interests threatened.

The Communists almost certainly believe that the tide is running strongly in their favor in South Vietnam. They therefore are encouraging the Viet Cong and Hanoi to hold on and to step up their pressures in the South. In the meanwhile they are trying to generate international pressures for a cessation of US bombings and a complete American withdrawal.

In the rest of Southeast Asia, unless the situation alters drastically, the Chinese appear content to continue their current policies. They will encourage Sukarno's aggressive anti-Western actions and give strong backing to the pro-Peiping Indonesian Communist Party. They will fan the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation, probably estimating that British and American influence in the region can be weakened at little cost to China. In Thailand they are likely to encourage increased dissident activity, while in Cambodia they will do what they can to further Sihanouk's chronic distrust of his neighbors and the US. Their guarded tolerance of Ne Win's Burma will probably continue.

In Northeast Asia, Peiping is evidently forced to take a long view. Its objective of a Communist regime in prosperous Japan is a faraway goal at best, and for the present the Chinese appear content to stir up discord in Tokyo's relations with the US as well as with Nationalist China and South Korea. Acting through the Japanese Communist Party, in which they are the dominant influence, the Chinese will abet nationalist and leftist agitation for the scrapping of the US-Japanese Defense treaty and the removal of US bases from Japan and Okinawa.

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In South Asia, Peiping will continue to court the Pakistanis and fan Karachi's fears of India and the effects of US military aid to India. Little improvement in Sino-Indian relations appears likely, but Peiping will probably seek to avoid another major flare-up in border fighting. The small Himalayan kingdoms, however, will be the targets of increased pressure designed to bring them more under Communist influence. In Ceylon, Peiping has less influence with the Senanayake government than it had under the Bandaranaike administration, and through Communist supporters, it may promote strikes and other demonstrations of opposition.

In Africa, considering that Peiping's serious bid for significant influence is scarcely three years old, its impact has been remarkable. Communist China has succeeded in winning recognition from many of the new nations and will probably win over still others. The Chinese have made considerable political mileage out of economic aid offers extended on a no-strings basis, and high-level personal diplomacy appears to have paid dividends. Chou En-lai has visited Africa three times in the past year and a large number of African leaders have been flattered by spectacular receptions in Peiping. In the search for close political friends and revolutionary allies, however, the Chinese also employ clandestine means. Africans are brought to China for training in subversion and guerrilla warfare and arms are secretly supplied to active and potential revolutionaries on the continent.

In Latin America, Communist China's official presence is still very small--one embassy and two trade offices--but Peiping is working to strengthen ties with its supporters, and the hemisphere has become a Sino-Soviet battleground of major importance. In Latin American Communist parties Peiping's exhortations to head-on revolutionary struggle strike a sympathetic chord among dissident elements eager to wrest power from the Moscow-oriented old guard leadership. A new complicating factor for the Chinese, however, may be the sharp deterioration of Sino-Cuban relations over the past year. If this trend continues, Peiping's Latin American ambitions may be impeded by Castroite as well as Soviet opposition.

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International Organizations

The UN poses a dilemma for Peiping. On the one hand, the Communist Chinese feel they deserve one of the big five seats, and they will continue to welcome international support for their membership and attempt to exploit US opposition. On the other hand, however, they resent the annual humiliation of being rejected for membership. The UN effort against them in Korea still rankles, and they have continued to display particular annoyance at all UN peacekeeping operations, which are aimed at damping down the very type of disorder the Chinese are anxious to promote.

They currently excoriate the world organization as a tool of the US and apparently have no desire to be a part of an effective international body. Rather they continue to press for a drastic reorganization in hopes that it will facilitate the exploitation and eventual destruction of the UN. At present, they are clearly unwilling to pay a price for admission and prefer to sit tight, stubbornly demanding the expulsion of Nationalist China. Peiping's leaders seem to believe that, although they can continue to get along outside the UN, the UN will be hard pressed to function while a nuclear power controlling nearly a quarter of the world's population remains outside. They are similarly cynical about international conferences on disarmament.

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